

Non-Profit Subcommittee Meeting – May 31, 2024
Conference Room Dare Admin Manteo NC

Attendees: Donna Creef, Malcom Fearing, Melissa Dickerson, Bob Peele, Elizabeth Morey, Duke Geraghty and Mitchell Bateman

The meeting started at 1:00 p.m.

A copy of the summary from the May 10 meeting was presented to the subcommittee. Eliabeth made a motion to accept the summary, seconded by Malcolm. Vote unanimous.

Bob presented information to the group about NC Department of Commerce opportunity zones. These zones were created in 2017 by federal legislation and is designed for private investors to invest funds in economically distressed areas. The mainland area of Dare County is a designated opportunity zone although no projects have been constructed under the opportunity zone program. He has contacted a UNC School of Government employee about the program and hopes to hear from her soon. There was discussion if the opportunity zone could be expanded to include some areas of Roanoke Island as a “contiguous census tract” and this will be one of the questions asked of the SOG staff.

Malcolm indicated the 2020 economic development report prepared by NCSU for Dare County had a lot of helpful information and recommended Dare County hire an economic development director. Housing is a huge part of the economic development of Dare County and our economic development and tourism industry is being hindered by the lack of housing supply. The group talked about the need to have professional staff to address housing and how such a position could be funded and administered. This issue will need to be part of any report that is prepared by the Task Force. Donna said that it is her idea to have a plan prepared and endorsed by the Task Force which is then sent to the towns and other stakeholders on the Task Force for endorsement. It will be incumbent upon the task force members to ensure their respective organizations support any plan produced by the task force.

Bob asked if the goal of the task force was to create a non-profit. Melissa said that a private non-profit that can solicit donations and manage fundraising activities is one idea that was discussed by the subcommittee at our first meeting. Donna said generally there are non-profits that work in concert with housing trust funds to address community housing needs. She said the City of Charlotte has tremendous support by the banking community. Mitchell pointed out that Safe Harbor is a large employer in the Wanchese Marine Park and is a potential private partner that should be investigated. Chris Sawin with the Outer Banks Community Foundation was identified as a source of information on non-profits. Melissa suggested Chris be invited to attend the June 25 task force meeting to hear the School of Government presentation from Tyler Mulligan. Donna will contact Mr. Sawin. She is also planning to prepare a handful of questions to submit to Tyler Mulligan

before his presentation on June 25. One specific question is the use of development agreements authorized under Chapter 160D of the NC general statutes. These agreements allow for governments to enter contracts with developers for the construction of infrastructure improvements. She is curious if such arrangements could be used for housing projects.

Elizabeth asked about the status of the Bowsetown property owned by Dare County. Malcolm said he is aware that a wetland survey had recently been created. This site will be included as part of the work of the Plan subcommittee that is working to identify potential sites throughout the county that may be candidates for housing development. It was noted that Dare County can elect to move forward with construction on the Bowsetown site regardless of the task force work.

Donna presented a copy of a bill recently submitted to the NC General Assembly for Durham County and the City of Durham to construct housing for first responders and teachers. This legislation should be monitored and the task force may want to recommend similar legislation be sought by the governments in Dare County. Duke said any such legislation for Dare County needed to be expanded to include more than teachers and first responders. Mitchell asked about the housing developed by the Dare Board of Education and Donna acknowledged that special legislation was adopted for that housing to occur. The group acknowledged that alternatives that did not involve special enabling legislation from the State should be examined first but that it may be difficult to have success without some sort of legislative efforts for funding options or to authorize incentives for local governments to use.

There was some discussion on funding options that should be explored. Elizabeth noted that increases in the sales tax, occupancy tax and land transfer taxes were non-starters. Malcolm said he didn't support increased taxes. Donna indicated that other communities in North Carolina fund housing programs with property taxes. The legislation for the some of the occupancy tax proceeds that go to the visitors bureau mentions that 25% can be used for the "impacts" of tourism. The group was unsure how such funds could be used for housing but the issue needs further discussion. Elizabeth mentioned the idea of a tax on short-term rentals. Mitchell said he recently heard some other communities had enacted a "vacant home" tax. Perhaps such a tax would encourage some property owners to transition to long-term rentals for residents. Duke said he had heard this as well but was unsure of their success. These two options were noted as worthy of additional discussions also.

The group agreed to meet again after the June 25 presentation by Tyler Mulligan, tentative date of July 12 .

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Prepared by Donna Creef, Chair Dare Community Housing Task Force

